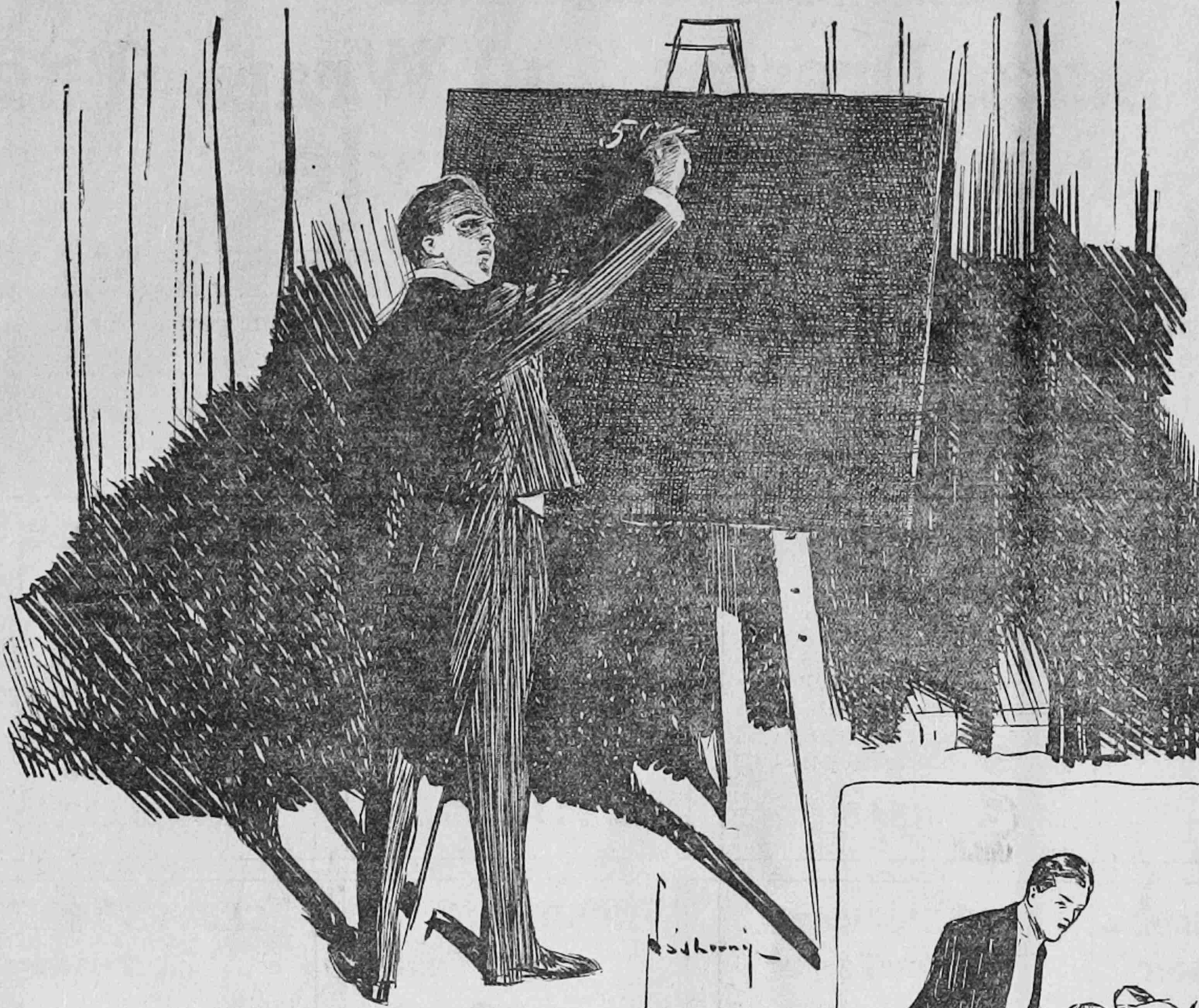


REVEALING the MYSTERIES OF SECOND SIGHT

It Is Shown That the Methods by Which Mind Readers Ply Their Puzzling Calling Are Surprisingly Simple



Attending as some of the demonstrations appear to the beholder, the methods by which mind readers ply their calling are surprisingly simple.

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THE dapper chap in a dress suit that fits him perfectly well descends from the stage to the aisle on his carpeted bridge, leaving a sheepish committee blinking at the footlights as guard of honor to the handsome young woman whose bandaged eyes they have just inspected.

"Will some gentleman in the audience kindly favor me with a bank bill or a treasury note? Any denomination. Thank you, sir, that will do very nicely. Now, will you please make a note of the number so as to be able to identify it?"

"As you will all notice, the lady is sitting on a pedestal made up of several wooden frames, which absolutely prevent the possibility of electric communication. Your committee has blindfolded her. She is quite unable to see the blackboard. I will now take a piece of chalk—no mystery here, as you see. And we will proceed with the test."

The dapper chap regains the stage and takes up position before the blackboard where his every movement is visible. The self-conscious committee shifts to a new set of attitudes. The young woman, leaning back in her chair, apparently surrenders herself to a trance-like condition, moves her lips and speaks in a strained faraway voice, subtly suggestive of a pre-scient soul bending to its arduous task.

"I think it is a five dollar bill."

The audience gives close attention, for every one can see that it is a really, truly five dollar bill, and even the scornfully sceptical are interested. The dapper chap writes "\$5.00" in heavy characters upon the board.

"First I see a letter E," continues the young woman. The dapper chap obediently transfers the letter with his grating chalk.

"The next appears to be 6," says the young woman. "Now put down the figure 4." She goes on easily from character to character, while the dapper chap follows her announcements on the blackboard and the audience forgets to rustle its programmes until the number of the bill is complete. She even describes the punctuating hieroglyph, and he of the faultless dress suit steps forward from the finished work with a smile, descending to the aisle once more.

"You are the gentleman who favored me, are you not? Thank you. Will you kindly note whether the bill is yours and the number correctly given? Thank you. Do you mind allowing me to show it to your neighbors? Thank you."

Oh, there is not the slightest doubt about it. The young woman has read the number of the bill without a slip, right through the bandages and the clustering group of the committee. And test the sceptical should suspect collusion or a confederate the dapper chap wanders far up the aisle for the next test and takes a fifty dollar bill from a stout gentleman in the middle of a row. It is quite too wonderful. The young woman's invisible eye is equal to any bill, large or small, and she is evidently well acquainted with the state of every pocketbook in the house. Yielding to an urgent request the dapper chap even consents to

try her with a watch, whereupon she begins by announcing that it is silver and gives the number as before.

Marvellous Second Sight.

Second sight! Mind reading! Surely every one has witnessed some such demonstration and has gone home afterward, perhaps unbelieving but puzzled, and, it may be, just a trifle uneasy. "Of course it's a trick, but how is it done?" comes the inevitable bromidion. The more credulous remark, "Well, there really may be something in it. Now, when Arthur fell down the cellar stairs and broke his leg"—launching into a domestic episode in which the occult furnishes a stimulating if unconvincing atmosphere. Others, a few, recognize in the achievements of the young woman psychic phenomena which are perfectly familiar and commonplace.

But the advantage, for the purposes of this article, is still with the bromidion. "It's a trick, but how is it done?" The "how" is rather clever, and, as always, simple. Some time before the booking of the attraction, when the dapper chap and the young woman were preparing for the working of wonders, when the present soul was in process of development in the earthly surroundings of a hall room, there was a long period of monotonous practice by which all the rest was made possible. The paraphernalia for that training were far less elaborate than stage acts frequently demand. They were nothing more than a small leaden ball and a string by which was suspended, in short, a pendulum. Which takes us immediately out of the realm of psychics into that of physics.

The pendulum was tacked up in the window, hanging from the cross piece, as the best place for observation. The string was shortened until, by experiment, it was found to register about seventy beats to the minute when set to swinging. Then the dapper chap, not yet arrayed in his too flawless clothes and probably far from dapper at all, took a seat beside the young woman and both began to watch this make-shift metronome.

As they watched they counted silently up to ten, emphasized a beat and began again. After half an hour of this they looked away from the pendulum for short intervals, glancing back frequently to see whether they had been able to keep the tempo exactly. If they had they were happy. If they had not they were irritated and began to wonder where the dried sausages were coming from should they fail to perfect the act. But in due course, after some days or weeks, they could hold the beat in unison without referring to the pendulum.

Then began another kind of training. The dapper chap would cry "Now!" sharply. Taking this as the start, both would begin to count silently. When the man reached any number up to ten that suited him he would rap the table sharply as the signal to stop.

"Well, where was I?" he would ask. And she would answer that he had meant to convey four or seven or nine or whatever point she had reached herself in her counting. If she was right, infallibly right, they were satisfied. If not, probably some epithet quite unreconcilable with the occult passed between them. However, in the end they could do the trick perfectly. Then for a time the young woman took the lead, and the man had to follow her until there was no longer any chance for error in the silent harmony of count.

But for public exhibition it is not enough to eliminate a chance for error. The chance must be buttressed and insured and double locked against. The blackboard and chalk of the real act were brought into play—a very rough blackboard and very hard chalk—and they began to practise in earnest.

In the first place, they devised a set of easy cues to determine the value of any bill which might be presented—\$1, "Thanks;" \$2, "All right;" \$5, "Thank



Will You Kindly Note Whether the Bill Is Yours and the Number Correctly Given?

you?" \$10, "Much obliged;" \$20, "That's it;" \$50, "That will do;" \$100, "Quite satisfactory." If you ever want to break up such a demonstration at the outset you might offer a ten thousand dollar bill. The chances are that the mind readers would have no signal ready for it. In determining the metal of proffered watches an equally simple series of phrases was prepared.

Drill Is Perfect.

From then on they did their drilling in the silent count, with the last syllable of a sentence uttered by the young woman as the starting signal and the sound of the chalk against the board as the stop signal. "I can see that a four is the next on the bill," she would say. The word "bill" corresponded with the emphasized beat or the "now" of the earlier practice. They would count from this start until the man touched the blackboard.

Additional safeguards could be introduced here. If the man made a mark sharply, with a quick scratch, it served as warning that the number was an odd one; if he moved the chalk slowly the number was even. The advantage of this was great, for, while the young woman might be counting slightly faster than standard tempo and might almost have reached seven, a slow stroke of the chalk at this point would correct her and settle her at six.

Still another refinement of the system was now approached. A dead pause of nine or ten seconds on a stage is dangerous. The sceptical and the knowing are quite likely to observe such a lapse, and to observe, moreover, that while some of the intervals are remarkably long others are very short. To overcome this difficulty the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, accompanied by a sharp tap of the chalk, stood, respectively, for 6, 7, 8, 9 and 0. Thus, for a number it was not necessary to count beyond five, and no long pauses ensued. If the man wished to communicate 3 he stopped the count at the third beat by simply placing the chalk against the board. But if he wished to communicate 8 he stopped at the third beat with a tap.

There remained, after all this, the necessity for regulating the standard of the tempo, the most important point of all. Excitement incident to public appearance, any slight nervousness, indisposition, might throw either completely out of harmony with the proper beat. So they composed a series of sentences that would scan, after a fashion—"I think it is a five-dollar bill." "Now—put down—the figure six." It was not difficult to find some such

rough syllabic rhythm to fit each utterance of the woman.

When she gave out one of these sentences she thereby set the tempo for the count, which picked up from her last syllable. "The next—appears—to be—an eight" (1, 2, 3, &c.). Always the last sound that came from her mouth was the emphatic beat from which the silent count took its start. Both persons continued the tempo the laid down until stopped by the signal. Long drilling made it unnecessary to force the rhythm, and the sentences could be spoken in the ordinary way, steadily and in perfect measure.

The series letters that precede numbers on bills formed a specific problem. While the first letters of the alphabet are most common a system was arranged to cover all twenty-six. This was done by grouping three variations of the method of chalking down the dollar sign with the regular count. The man could start to write the dollar sign with sharp taps, or gently, or he could omit the sign altogether. The silent counting did the rest, using the same safeguard of the quick or slow stroke to confirm odd or even, as in this table:—

Count.	Manner.	With Taps.	No Taps.	No &c.
1	Quick	A	B	C
2	Slow	D	E	F
3	Quick	G	H	I
4	Slow	J	K	L

The terminating hieroglyphs that punctuate a bill number, asterisk, dashes, cross-bar and others, were easily tabulated and made to answer to corresponding numbers from 1 on. Of course, the young woman did not turn her attention to these hieroglyphs until she received the signal from the man that the number itself stood complete.

Finally came a day when they were to put their long days of training to the test, possibly before some

with the last sound she utters. The operator in this case stops her on the first beat by picking up the card, drawing it sharply toward himself across the board, then holding it up for the inspection of the audience.

Of Course It's Easy.

"I see a black card," says the young woman, with shameless mendacity—"a club. It seems to be the eight of clubs." Here is another rhythmical sentence, and both begin counting immediately. The operator has noticed that the next card in the rotation is the 3, which fits in the third beat of the distich, there being no king. At the third count he stops by laying down the 8. He picks up the 3, thumping gently and drawing it toward him.

"The next card is red. I think it is the three of diamonds," says the young woman, and instantly both begin counting again. The operator finds that he has no ten, the next card in the rotation being the two.



She Goes on Easily from Character to Character, While the Dapper Chap Follows Her Announcements on the Blackboard

manager or in the kindlier presence of friends. The young woman was blindfolded, placed with her back to the blackboard, where she sat listening acutely. The dapper chap asked some one present for a bill. His acknowledgment of "Thanks" indicated to her at once that its denomination was \$1. What she had to discover piecemeal was the fact that it was marked "R19684920."

The One Dollar Bill.

When he was ready before the blackboard she said, "I think it is a one dollar bill." Then both began to count. At six the man touched the board with the chalk and scrawled "1.00" slowly, without any dollar mark. Sixth line, third column of the table indicated "R."

"The first is the letter R," she said, and the man stopped the count on the first beat with a quick, easy dash of the chalk as he began to write the "R."

"The next I see is the figure 1," she went on. He stopped her this time on the fourth beat with a sharp tap and a quick scratch on the board. This gave her "nine" and showed her that she was right in taking an odd number. So it went on, figure by figure, until the last. Having received the signal for "0" from five beats, tap and slow mark, she gave it. The man delayed marking it on the board until the beat had passed beyond any recognized signal.

"Now, there is some kind of mark after the number," she said. They counted to the proper place, where he stopped by placing his chalk in position as if waiting instructions. "A mark like three dashes coming to a point," she added. And the test was over.

Silent counting, in more or less elaborate form, is the basis for almost all the second sight and mind reading acts for public performance. Different systems and variations have been introduced and successfully practised, but all silent methods work upon the same principle. There are several good applications, one being the card test.

"Eight kings threatened to save

Nine fair ladies for one sick knave."

Did they really? They certainly did, probably back in the time of Merlin or whoever invented the first card trick. The time honored distich affords the best rotation and the one most easily remembered, translating into

"Eight, king, three, ten, two, seven,

Nine, five, queen, four, ace, six, knave."

The suit is indicated by the manner in which the card is picked up from the table or inclined plane on which the test is exhibited. Thus, clubs is indicated to the blindfolded "medium" when the operator draws it toward him across the table; spades is shown by a sharp twist in picking up the card so as to make an audible scratching sound; hearts by setting the fingers down upon the card with a thump and diamonds by a thump followed by drawing across the board as for clubs.

The dapper chap calls for some one from the audience or for the stage committee to take charge of a pack of cards and select any eight cards, or more if desired. These the volunteer places on the table or inclined board exposed to the audience. We will suppose that the cards selected are 3D, 9H, JC, 8C, 4H, QH, 2S, AS. The operator busies himself arranging the cards, meanwhile noticing that he has an 8—the first beat in the distich.

"Are you almost ready now?" asks the young woman, impatiently—not so impatiently, however, but that she sets the tempo, "Are—you al—most ready now?" They both begin the silent count

They count silently, "Eight kings threatened to"—At this point the operator stops by setting down the three, then takes up the two with a sharp twist.

"It is a black card," says the young woman. "It seems to be the deuce of spades." Both begin to count, "Eight kings threatened to save nine"—Here the operator stops, picking up the card with a sharp dab of his fingers against the board.

"Red this time," says the young woman. "I plainly see the nine of hearts." And so it goes, through the list. The price of success, according to all "mind readers," is constant drill in the count. Once this is perfected occult wonders are easy.

The adding of four columns of figures of four figures each is another clever example of what may be done with the silent counting. A volunteer from the audience writes the figures on the board, and the blindfolded "medium" adds them, down and across. The process is the same as in the bill test, the signals being given with taps of the chalk and the way in which the figures are written. The first signal is given by the operator in drawing the line under the figures. A secondary code is necessary to indicate the amount carried each time.

The usual practice in winding up this test is "mind reading" of figures pointed out by the operator. He points to various numbers, occasionally to a blank spot, in succession, and the young woman calls them off. This is done by a prearranged rotation, such as "three, nine, four, two, nothing there, eight, one, six, naught, two, nothing there, five, seven," or any other system. The operator, of course, follows this memorized table in pointing. He has several tricks at hand to fill up a gap in the rotation. Suppose, for instance, that there happens to be no six on the board. After she has identified the "one" correctly he turns to the audience with a wink, as if planning some sly trick, then writes a "six" in a vacant place. She immediately names it and the audience smiles delightedly.

The calling of figures that are pointed out by some person from the audience, usually worked in connection with the above, does not depend upon the counting process, but upon the quick eye and judgment of the operator. Just as the conjurer is able to force a card, the operator must know how to judge where the wavering pointer is going to land by the way the volunteer advances it. A code of signals does the rest, such as "any one," "any at all," "any one at all," "no difference," "take your choice," and others.

Another of the favorite tests which rely upon a memorized rotation is the knight's tour in chess. The blackboard is marked into sixty-four squares, numbered from left to right. The problem is to start the knight anywhere and take it over the board with its proper move, no square to be omitted and no square to be crossed more than twice. The operator permits the audience to name the square from which the start is to be made, then follows the directions of the "medium" with the chalk. It makes not the slightest difference where the start is made for the system is rotary and when the sequence is once learned can be picked up at any point. There are a number of tables, this being the best:—

1, 18, 33, 50, 60, 54, 64, 37, 32, 15, 5, 20, 3, 9, 26, 41, 58, 52, 62, 56, 39, 24, 7, 22, 37, 43, 28, 13, 30, 45, 35, 29, 46, 36, 21, 38, 44, 27, 42, 57, 51, 61, 55, 40, 23, 8, 14, 4, 19, 25, 19, 34, 49, 59, 53, 63, 48, 31, 16, 6, 12, 2, 17, 11, 1. If the start should be made at 6, for instance, the system would simply turn the corner and run on from 11 to 1, 18, 33, &c.